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An overturned boat is towed to the docks by the Etowah County Sheriff's Department boat Thursday after a collision on the Coosa River near Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. left several people seriously injured.

Boaters injured in collision

BY KENNETH A. HOBSON JR.
Times Staff Writer

Limited visibility caused by thick fog is what Cary Ackerson is attributing a two-boat collision to. It happened Thursday afternoon on the Coosa River behind the Gadsden Water Works.

Ackerson and an unidentified man were aboard a small boat traveling north on the Coosa River. It collided with another boat occupied by three people.

Ackerson, who was interviewed by The Times before being taken to the hospital by ambulance, said the boat he was in entered a thick patch of fog and collided with another small boat.

"When we entered the fog, we couldn't see anything and ran smack over that other boat," Ackerson said. "We didn't see anything before we rammed into them.

"Afterward, we were left in the water."

The boat Ackerson and his mate were aboard capsized, leaving both wading in the river until emergency personnel arrived.

Neither suffered serious injuries, and both were transport-



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Emergency medical care is given to three victims of a boating accident Thursday on the Coosa River after their boat was towed to the Coosa Landing docks.

ed to Gadsden Regional Medical Center.

Injuries among the other boaters reportedly were more severe. All three were taken from

the scene by ambulance, and each had been fitted with a cervical collar to stabilize the spine and had been strapped to a back brace.

Initial reports indicated one person could have head and hand injuries.

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Management Agency supervisor Don Wilson verified two of the three men were severely injured, with one in critical condition and the other in stable condition.

He said the man in stable condition had a large laceration to his hand and head trauma, while the one in critical condition had internal trauma, the extent of which had not been determined.

Wilson said the third man was not severely injured but received minor cuts.

None of their names were released because family members had yet to be contacted.

The boat Ackerson was in was swept down river but was recovered by the Etowah County Sheriff's Department soon afterward.

Reginald Thomas was fishing on a pier behind Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. when the accident happened and saw the collision.

Thomas said as he was fishing when he noticed a boat with three aboard near the river bank be-

'The boat that was traveling north hit the other boat and went airborne at least 25 feet in the air.'

- REGINALD THOMAS
Witness

hind the Gadsden Water Works.

He said he watched as they secured their things to leave the location and moved away from the bank; then he heard the sound of "a tremendous collision."

"As I was sitting watching the small boat leave the location they were in, I noticed another boat coming north on the river," Thomas said. "And just as soon as the small boat could pull away from the bank and into the middle of the river, the other boat had slammed into it.

"The boat that was traveling north hit the other boat and went airborne at least 25 feet in the air," Thomas said. "I had never seen anything like it."

He said a few seconds after the collision he heard voices pleading for help and immediately dialed 911.